DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 038 181 PS 003 158

TITLE	Development of the Early Childhood Education Program. Basic Plan.
INSTITUTION	Appalachia Educational Lab., Charleston, W. Va.
PUB DATE	15 Sep 69
NOTE	12p.
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.70
DESCRIPTORS	*Early Childhood Education, Educational Objectives, Home Visits, Mobile Classrooms, *Preschool Programs, *Program Descriptions, Rural Areas, Television Curriculum
IDENTIFIERS	Appalachia

ABSTRACT

The early childhood education program described in this report is a 3-year program of preschool education to prepare 6-year-old rural children to perform tasks and acquire skills expected of the average child at the first grade level. Language, cognition, motor skills, and orienting and attending skills are emphasized. This program is proposed as an alternative to conventional kindergarten in Appalachia. The program will be considered successful if all children with IQs of 90 and above, master 90 percent of 250 behavioral objectives. The strategy is to develop a child-centered, home-oriented program for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds. Television broadcasts, based on specific behavioral objectives, will be presented on commercial channels. Weekly home visits will be made by trained paraprofessionals drawn from the field test area, and a mobile classroom will provide a setting for group activities and social development of children. Over a period of 5 years, the program's work plan provides for 1 year of design, 3 years of formative evaluation, and 1 year of summative evaluation and program description (July 1971 - June 1972). Estimated costs for the total program are presented. (DR)

ED038181

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

BASIC PLAN

DEVELOPMENT OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM

APPALACHIA
Educational Laboratory, Inc.

PS003158

September 15, 1969

Development of the Early Childhood Education Program

I. Problem

The well-being and wholesome development of the individual during infancy and early childhood years is recognized by an increasing number of psychologists and educators as crucial. The importance of training in the formative years is predicated on the assumption that there is a high positive correlation between formalized pre-school training and later performance in school and in society. The widespread acceptance of this hypothesis is clearly demonstrated by the nation's investment in Head Start. Additional evidence is contained in the many proposals, from Montessori[1] to Bloom,[2] for early educational intervention into the lives of culturally disadvantaged children.

The traditional way for meeting this need in the past has been to establish public kindergartens. These have generally been limited to urban and suburban areas, however, and no state or section in the United States has provided an adequate program of preschool education to rural children. Neither has any of them begun preschool education for children under age five, although it is known that educational nurture should begin at an earlier age.

Two conclusions that may be drawn are that conventional kindergartens are not providing adequate preschool education for all of the children of America who need

---

[1]Fred M. Hechinger, Ed., Pre-School Education Today, Doubleday and Company, Inc., New York, 1966, pp. 58-60.

[2]Lester D. Crow et al, Educating the Culturally Disadvantaged Child, David McKay Company, Inc., New York, 1966, pp. 118-119.

early formal training to enhance their chances for success in life and that an alternative program for providing preschool education at an earlier age and to rural children needs to be developed.

Such an alternative program is needed especially in Appalachia where the population is largely rural and where publicly supported kindergartens are not available for the most part. (Four of the six states in the region of the Laboratory at the time of its establishment had no provision for publicly supported preschool education.) In addition, poverty and cultural deprivation strike deep in Appalachia, and many children caught in its pockets of social poverty have been doomed to lifelong separation from opportunities the outside world of America increasingly values as the inherent right of every child. The adults in the life of the average Appalachian child cannot provide sufficient means of escape because they themselves are victims of the same incapsulation.

The two factors cited above--the persisting cultural deprivation of Appalachia and the importance of early years to later development--first prompted selection of early childhood education as a priority endeavor of the Laboratory. It was evident that separation of Appalachian children from the opportunities afforded by a preschool education was an obstacle to their wholesome development and well-being and had an accumulative debilitating effect on performance in school. Enrollment figures for kindergartens across the nation provided further evidence that young children in the region continue to be shortchanged in an era when enriched environments are generally considered essential. While eligible children in the United States as a whole were enrolled on a

better than 50 per cent basis in kindergartens in 1966-67, eligible children in West Virginia were enrolled on a less than 4 per cent basis.[3]

II. Educational Outcome

The outcome of the Early Childhood Education Program will be an alternative three-year program of preschool education which will prepare children at the age of six to perform those tasks expected of the average child at the first grade level in language, cognition, motor skills, and orienting and attending skills. The program is to be especially designed for rural areas of the United States and to be within the financial capability of Appalachian states.

The criterion used to measure the success of the program will be 90 per cent performance of 250 behavioral objectives in language, cognition, motor skills, and orienting and attending skills upon completion of the three-year program by all six-year-old children with IQ's of 90 and above.[4]

III. Strategy

Factors Influencing Selection of Strategy

The strategy for the achievement of the Early Childhood Education Program objective is the development of a child-centered, home-oriented preschool program

---

[3]These proportions are based on the following facts. There were an estimated 4,713,000 first grade children and an estimated 2,513,000 kindergarten children enrolled in the United States in 1966-67. There were 42,691 first grade children and 1,634 kindergarten children enrolled in West Virginia. (Renetzky, A. and Kaplan, P. A., Editors, Standard Education Almanac 1968, Academic Media, Inc., Los Angeles, 1968, p. 146 and 1966-67 Educational Statistical Summary, West Virginia Department of Education, State Superintendent of Free Schools, Charleston, West Virginia, pp. 40; 197; and 204.)

[4]Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., "Evaluation Plan for AEL Early Childhood Education for Contract Year 1969," The Laboratory, Charleston, West Virginia, 1969.

to be delivered by means of television, home visitations, mobile classrooms, and other media. It involves building a curriculum based on behavioral objectives and preparing materials and methods particularly appropriate for children of three, four, and five years of age in rural Appalachia.

The physical constraints of Appalachia were factors which influenced selection of the strategy. Isolated schools in remote sections of a sparsely populated and mountainous region and a primitive road system precluded establishment of conventional classroom-oriented kindergartens common in urban areas. Further, funds are not available for this approach; and even if they were, prepared teachers are not available. The establishment of such kindergartens would require a 10 per cent increase in teaching staff and a 10 per cent increase in classroom space, equipment, and auxiliary services. More importantly, however, the traditional design does not include instruction of three- and four-year-old children and thus does not provide the readiness training required for first graders entering school.

Positive factors influencing the selection of the strategy are that a television set is present in over 90 per cent of the homes in Appalachia, and most preschool children in these homes watch television several hours a day (80% watch two hours or more per day).[5] It is assumed they can be guided into viewing and participating in instructional broadcasts. Parents, even those with low aspirational levels, usually want their children to have better opportunities than they have experienced. On the basis of their participation in Head Start, it is assumed that these parents will maintain

---

[5]Frank H. Hooper and William H. Marshall, The Initial Phase of a Preschool Curriculum Development Project, Final Report, Morgantown, West Virginia, 1968, pp. Q-27; Q-29.

schedules and participate in learning activities beneficial to their children if stimulated in the effort by home visitors.

Local school personnel are interested in learning about new services and programs which show promise, and once the economy and accessibility have been demonstrated to their satisfaction, they are willing to accept innovations. This assumption is strengthened by the signed agreement of eight county school systems of southern West Virginia with the Appalachia Educational Laboratory to cooperate in field testing the Early Childhood Education Program.

Since the research community has shown a renewed interest in early childhood education in recent years, it is possible for the Laboratory to find information useful in its developmental effort. This includes work completed and being continued on Head Start; activities of research and development centers such as the University of Georgia's Center for the Stimulation of Early Learning; the resources of the National Laboratory for Early Childhood Education and its affiliates, such as the Demonstration and Research Center for Early Education at George Peabody College for Teachers; and the research done by Deutsch, Bloom, Segal, Piaget, Bereiter, and others.

The Laboratory program will provide preschool training without the constraints imposed by the traditional approach. In both the traditional approach and the one proposed, the objectives are to facilitate development in language, cognition, psychomotor, and orienting and attending skills. The unique difference of the Appalachia preschool education program is the methods of linking teacher and learner. It will serve essentially the same number of preschoolers with the same

PS 003158

number of personnel but will alter the roles and responsibilities of personnel by delivering the program via television, mobile facilities, and paraprofessionals.

The Laboratory's preschool program can be sufficiently developed to provide an adequate preschool program under the constraints imposed by a rural population and a shortage of professionally trained nursery and kindergarten teachers.

Finally, a projection of costs to a large population shows that it will be possible to implement the proposed strategy in a natural setting at a per pupil figure considered reasonable by the Laboratory. In a report prepared by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory for submission to legislators of the State of West Virginia,[6] it was estimated that the Early Childhood Education Program could be provided to rural children in West Virginia at an operating cost of less than $200 per pupil per year.

The program will present an alternate mode of providing instruction to preschool children in settings other than Appalachia. The Laboratory believes that it is a viable mode.

Program Components

The home-oriented preschool program is designed to affect the behavior of children by providing them with experiences that will counteract negative environmental influences and increase their potential to profit from later educational opportunities. The experiences provided to affect the educational variable of

---

[6]Benjamin E. Carmichael, Memorandum to West Virginia State Legislators, Charleston, West Virginia, October 31, 1968.

child behavior will be described in a preschool curriculum and a set of appropriate teaching materials to be developed by the Laboratory. This curriculum will yield a framework of detailed learning experiences based on behavioral objectives identified for the Laboratory by Hooper and Marshall.[7] These behavioral objectives are applicable generally to children of three, four, and five years of age and specifically to children of Appalachia. As the program is developed, revisions of the behavioral objectives will be made by the Curriculum Materials Team based upon experience and evaluation factors. This procedure was recommended by the Laboratory's 1969 Site Visitors Team.

The program is designed to develop an alternative mode for providing instruction to preschool children. Access to the program is provided by modern technology and mobility and does not depend upon the 1 to 30 ratio of teacher-student interface in a traditional classroom. This strategy is consistent with the strategy of the Educational Cooperative of using media, technology, and mobile facilities to increase accessibility of educational opportunities in the region (see Basic Plan, Development of the Educational Cooperative Program).

The three components of television broadcasts, home visits, and mobile classroom are highly interrelated, and each must be carefully correlated with the others.

The television broadcasts will be on commercial channels receivable on all home sets. They will be based on specific behavioral objectives applicable to the target population and will be designed for the group's interest and comprehension

---

[7]Hooper and Marshall, op. cit.

level. Broadcasts will be one-half hour long, five days per week, for a total of 150 broadcasts per year. Activities necessary to accomplish this will include curriculum planning, script writing, and videotaping. Products resulting will be:

1. A set of objectives written in behavioral terms.
2. A curriculum design based on those objectives.
3. Scripts and related materials for each broadcast.
4. Video tapes.
   a. 150 episodes of "Around the Bend" for year one.
   b. 120 new episodes for year two.
   c. 90 new episodes for year three.
   d. A set of 150 tapes drawn from the above production of a quality to be used as the first year of a three-year cycle of broadcasts.
5. Documentation of the process involved in the production of curriculum-specific video tapes.

Home visits will be made by trained paraprofessionals drawn from the field test area. Each home will be visited by a home visitor weekly for approximately one-half hour, counseling with parents, providing learning activities and materials, and getting reactions to the program. Activities involved will include selecting and training paraprofessionals, preparing materials for their use, and planning for effective utilization of their services. Products resulting will be:

1. Selection and training procedures.
2. Materials for home use, totaling 34 weekly editions for each of three years.
3. Guidelines for effective use of home visitors.

The mobile classroom provides a setting for group activities and social development of children. It will be self-propelled, able to traverse the Appalachian region efficiently, staffed by a professional teacher with an aide, and contain items required for effectively working with small groups of preschool children. It will make weekly visits of approximately one and one-half hours each at locations serving 10-15 children each. Activities involved will include planning specific lessons within the program curriculum correlated with the lessons of the other two components and planning group activities stressing social growth and development. Products resulting will be:

1. Weekly and daily lesson plans for 34 weeks of each of three years.
2. The design for an innovative mobile classroom for preschool children.
3. Documentation of the logistical effort involved in operating a mobile classroom in Appalachia.

Stages of Product Development

The stages of development for the Early Childhood Education Program flow from design through a formative evaluation sequence to analysis, summative evaluation, and description. At the final point the program will be declared ready for operational testing. There will be a parallel developmental effort for the three components. Chronologically, the stages are:

1. Design: September, 1967-June, 1968.
2. Formative Evaluation, Year One: July, 1968-June, 1969.
   Formative Evaluation, Year Two: July, 1969-June, 1970.
   Formative Evaluation, Year Three: July, 1970-June, 1971.
3. Analysis of Data, Summative Evaluation, Final Description: July, 1971-June, 1972.

IV. Work Plan

The anticipated life span of the Early Childhood Education Program covers a period of five years. The work plan provides for one year of design, three years of formative evaluation, and one year of summative evaluation and program description. This schedule, which also notes key decisions, expected outputs, and estimated costs, is presented in tabular form in Figure 1, page 11. For administrative and descriptive purposes, outputs and costs are shown by program components, where feasible. Decisions are made in the context of the total program only.

Phases and Dates of Development	Key Decisions	Program Component Outputs			Estimated Costs			
		Television	Home Visits	Mobile Classroom	Television	Home Visits	Mobile Class.	Total
Design 1967-1968	Determination of best modes of instruction to achieve outcomes and reach children. Formation of behavioral objectives based on Appalachian children.	Program Proposal Survey and Critique of the Literature Behavioral Objectives for Preschool Children Mobile Classroom Design.			--	--	--	$ 75,000
First Year Formative Evaluation 1968-1969	Type and number of staff needed for each component. Appropriate kinds of materials needed. Staff training required. Sequence and correlation of methods of delivery.	Curriculum design. Documentation of production process. Scripts, related materials 150 videotaped lessons.	Selection and training procedures. 34 editions of materials for home use. Home visitation utilization.	Weekly and daily lesson plans for 34 weeks. Documentation of logistical effort.	$120,000	$60,000	$55,000	$235,000
Second Year Formative Evaluation 1969-1970	Based on experiences of Year One: Revised staff needs. Revised materials. Revised training. Revised sequencing and correlation of components.	Revised curriculum design. Documentation of the production process. Scripts, related materials. 120 videotaped lessons.	Revised selection of training procedures. 34 editions of materials for home use. Home visitation utilization.	Weekly and daily lesson plans for 34 weeks. Documentation of logistical effort.	$135,000	$75,000	$70,000	$280,000
Third Year Formative Evaluation 1970-1971	Based on experiences of Year One and Two: Revised staff needs. Revised materials. Revised training. Revised sequencing and correlation of components.	Revised curriculum design. Documentation of the production process. Scripts, related materials. 90 videotaped lessons.	Revised selection and training procedures. 34 editions of materials for home use. Home visitation utilization.	Weekly and daily lesson plans for 34 weeks. Documentation of logistical effort.	$125,000	$75,000	$70,000	$270,000
Summative Evaluation 1971-1972	Format of final report. Analysis of data.	Complete description of the program including: Gains expected to be produced. Process required to establish program. Cost effectiveness of program. Staff requirements, training procedures for each component. One full year of all curriculum material.			--	--	--	$150,000

Figure 1. Early Childhood Education Program: Key Decisions and Outputs by Components and Costs